

The Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries, working in cooperation with the Alabama Agricultural Statistics Service, USDA, is proud to present the 44th edition of *Alabama Agricultural Statistics*. The numbers contained in this publication are a testimony to the importance of agriculture in the State of Alabama. Farm and forestry receipts reached a record \$4.8 billion in 2001 at the farm gate, with a much greater total economic impact to the State's economy after considering the many jobs created beyond the farm. Alabama ranks 23rd in the nation in farm cash receipts in spite of depressed farm prices for many of the commodities we produce. Farmers must contend not only with weather uncertainties to produce and market their products, but many other events out of their control such as trade disputes, global supplies, the rising costs of inputs, and unfortunately tragic events such as the attacks on September 11, 2001. Despite these challenges, the Department of Agriculture and Industries will continue to partner with farmers, agribusinesses, research institutions, other government agencies and our elected leaders to continue to move the State's number one industry forward.

In this issue, we pay special recognition to one of our most diverse sectors in agriculture, the greenhouse, nursery, and sod industries. The beauty we all enjoy from seeing colorful landscapes surrounding homes, businesses, and entire communities begins with the producer. Countless nurseries, greenhouse operations, and sod farms growing a variety of plants, flowers, shrubs, trees, and lawn grasses can be found across the entire State. Many don't realize this industry ranks 4th in Alabama farm gate receipts totaling over \$221 million in 2001, with many of the products shipped nationwide and across the globe. This segment of Alabama agriculture will continue to play a key role in our successful industry.

Charles Bishop
Commissioner

I would like to thank Alabama farmers for their tireless cooperation with the Alabama Agricultural Statistics Service to produce this bulletin. The numbers contained in this summary are possible only by having timely and accurate reports on our surveys from producers and agribusinesses. Our job is to measure, or count, agriculture for the state of Alabama and the nation. Following a quick review of these pages, there is no doubt that *Alabama Agriculture Counts!*

My appreciation is also extended to our corps of enumerators who collect the data and are our ambassadors with our respondents. And a special thanks to the staff of the Alabama Agricultural Statistics Service for their dedication and efforts to put the bulletin together.

Herb Vanderberry
State Statistician